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ing from north of west clear across the sky, almost to the zenith, down to south of east, made a very beautiful and impressive sight. It was very much admired by those I called out to see it.

I should like to know if this display was noticed in other parts of the country and if others have observed similar phenomena at other times.

G. IRVING GAVETT

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON,

SEATTLE, WASH.,

May 2, 1919, at 11:30 P.M.

#### THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

To THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have read with much interest Dr. Felix Neumann's article published in your number of April 4 and I heartily agree with him that the creation of a new section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, to be devoted to the history of science, would be most desirable.

I think it is hardly necessary to demonstrate the necessity of such historical studies, but I beg to submit the following arguments in support of Dr. Neumann's proposition.

1. The history of science has a real and full signification only for scientifically trained people, and it appeals equally to scientists of all kinds, hence it is natural that its study be promoted by such an association as the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

2. Such historical studies, however, are very different from scientific studies proper; they require a special turn of mind, a special equipment and special methods without the use of which no high standard of accuracy can be obtained, hence it is necessary that they be promoted by an independent section.

3. Such independent sections have been organized many years ago by the Versammlung deutscher Naturforscher und Aerzte and by the Società italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze, notwithstanding the fact that societies exclusively devoted to the history of science exist both in Germany and in Italy.

GEORGE SARTON

CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

#### QUOTATIONS

##### THE OBSTRUCTION OF MEDICAL RESEARCH IN GREAT BRITAIN

THE passage through a standing committee of the House of Commons, without amendment, of the so-called "Dogs' Protection Bill" has rudely awakened to a danger too lightly regarded, every one who in any way realizes the importance of the issues involved. In the *Times* of April 8, Sir Philip Magnus tells how the past master of parliamentary tactics who introduced the bill was able to bring it up for second reading unexpectedly, at the close of a sitting and to secure, almost without discussion, its reference to a standing committee. The committee was apparently composed in the usual way, mainly of members selected with reference to their political affiliations, without any regard to their competence to deal with an essentially scientific question; three or four medical members were added and a contingent of nominees of the members in charge of the bill, who could be trusted to know his own supporters. In two short sessions, and with the help of the closure, the bill passed through this committee without amendment. The next stage will be that it will come before the House for third reading at the next opportunity, which may occur any week.

The effect of the bill, if it should pass into law, is plain enough. It would render any one who made an experiment of any kind upon a dog liable to prosecution. Its enactment would cripple progress, so far as this country is concerned, in some of the most important fields of medical investigation. The whole weight of informal opinion must be brought to bear to prevent such a calamity. Letters of protest and warning have appeared in the *Times* of April 5, 7, 8 and 9, from Sir Edward Sharpey Schafer, Dr. Thomas Lewis, Dr. Leonard Hill, Professor Langley and Professor Starling. The *Morning Post* of April 7 published under the heading, "A Blow to Medical Science," an admirable statement of the case against the bill. The lay press is fulfilling a valuable function in thus enlightening general opinion.

So far as our own readers are concerned, we are preaching to those who need no conver-